

Viking Saga

Northwest High School
Grand Island, Nebraska
December 2012
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Anticipation of the Holiday Season

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Crazed Black Friday shopping stuns Viking Saga staffer

Alyssa Lillienthal
STAFF WRITER

Let's go! Go, Go! Shop till you drop! Grab it and run!

Those are a few of the things I heard on Thursday, the day in which Black Friday actually starts, which is what we all know as the day you buy things we need at a better price, fast.

I have a mixed opinion on this: it's nice to go and buy things for a lower price, but not fight or hurt someone for those things.

When I went, it wasn't as hectic as people make it sound, but I guess it depends on where you go.

I went to Grand Island's South Walmart and it was not bad at all, it was actually boring at first. I waited in a spot for two hours.

Then the time came, and my heart started to race and I was scared from all of the stories of items being taken from your hands and getting hit by random items.

In all the chaos, I managed to get the item I needed and a item for a friend.

Then we went to Old Navy, which was completely different. We waited two hours in line to get in!

It was nuts and boring. I lost my mom in the 500 other people in this small store!

Even though I couldn't find her, I still shopped and found some amazing items, then waited in a line for another hour to check out.

This was actually my first Black Friday I went out and experienced, and I had expected the worst from

what people had said about it.

It turned out to be exciting and fun, not knowing if there was going to be enough of what I wanted, or not being able to find something in time.

I got lost once, but my mom and her "team" found me. That's another thing: go with other people and stay in groups: it's easy to get lost in crowd! Our team had five other people in it. Your team could have more or less!

I found it really boring at first, but as the night grew into day, it got more and more fun.

The horrid part was the extremely long lines and waiting for hours and hours for a simple object.

I'm the most impatient person when I have to wait to get something I want and it's right in front of me.

The awesome part was getting my brother a guitar which he is going to love!

I hated when people grabbed stuff from other people. It is stupid how people fight over something that's going to be on sale anyway. I hadn't ever experienced this first hand, but I'm glad I didn't!

Through all of this, I found that I don't exactly like Black Friday; I'd much rather shop on a regular day than be rushed around to different shops in the cold, even if there were better prices.

I just don't think using up a thankful time to wait in line is worth it. My advice to you is stay at home watch a movie and drink hot cocoa.

[[Student Poll]] Did you shop on Black Friday?

43% Yes

57% No

Why do you shop on Black Friday?

10% The Excitement / to be a part of something big

14% Fun time with Friends/Family

24% To get the Best Sales

51% Other

Why don't you shop on Black Friday?

29% Crowds

4% I Hate ANY Kind of Shopping

7% I Think it's Dumb

10% I'm Too Lazy

60% Other

Viking Saga

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Black Friday Facts

In 2012, the average
Black Friday shopper
spent **\$423**

Total consumer spending on Black
Friday (2011): **\$52.4 Billion**

from Statistic
Brain website

226 million shoppers
shopped in stores
or online on
Black Friday in 2011

23% of
Black Friday
retail shoppers
camped out at a
store before sales
began

Correction

In the Issue 3 story, "State Tourney Venues Work Hard, Plan Well," it was stated that the school pays \$70,000 to pay for the costs of being a State Volleyball Tournament venue. This money does not come from Northwest High School; rather, the Volleyball Community Committee is responsible for the cost. We apologize for any confusion this may have caused.

Semester finals weigh on students' minds

Kayla Johnson
STAFF WRITER

Everyone is counting down the days and trying to find time to study. Finals stress out everyone who is anyone.

For freshmen, it might be the science test. For sophomores, it might include biology, or if they are in AP History. Juniors have Chemistry. For seniors, any AP class or a college class may cause last minute studying.

It's the time of year people love but hate at the same time. If students study, they will do fine. If they are one of those who work or is involved in sports, they might have trouble finding time to study.

Freshmen find out if they are good or bad test takers. Another study habit is to stop worrying about it.

"Semesters are easy,"

sophomore Shae Lott said.

Others think differently, depending on what class they are taking.

"They stress me out," sophomore Caitlin Bartz stated, like most other students would describe this time of year.

Seniors are the ones to go to when it comes to this. They have been here the longest and know what the test might be like.

When finals are over, the weight will be lifted off students' shoulders, but by then students will be remembering those questions that they couldn't answer. The trick to that is not to worry about it; think of it as a quiz.

Students will have to study more than they usually do. Having study dates with people who have the same classes can be a helpful technique.

"Some classes are easy; some

are hard," sophomore Quinnton Williams said.

With that statement, students should know that there are some classes students won't have to study profusely for, but they should look over the stuff they are struggling on.

English is one of those classes that if students read the book they needed to read and paid attention in class, the semester test should be a piece of cake.

For those kids who played Bike Race or were on Pinterest during class and their book never left their locker, good luck to them!

Going over study guides or rereading some notes should help. Studying for 15 minutes a night will give students an advantage.

Remember that most of the questions on the semester final have already been previewed on tests.

State Mock Trial: Third Year, Third Place

Cody Bristow
STAFF WRITER

"Court adjourned." Once the sound of those words leave the mouth of the judge, the crowd, along with the Northwest mock trial team, cheers with pride.

For the past three years, the Northwest mock trial team has qualified for the state competition, which made this another year of experience with the top teams.

This year's mock trial team consisted of seven members: seniors Holly Green and Shana Havenridge, along with juniors Rachel Jacobsen, Rachel Phinney, Laura Springer, Braelyn Verba, and Evan Wiese.

This year there were a few changes in the mock trial coaching staff. For one, last year's head coach, Mrs. Jane Brown, retired, and Mr. Gibson was appointed as the new head coach. Mrs. Brown's daughter, along with one other experienced

attorney, were attorney coaches, but they left along with Mrs. Brown. Knowing he would need some help, Mr. Gibson asked Mrs. Kearney to come help the team, and she gladly accepted. Mrs. Kearney pushed the team in practices, but all the blood, sweat, and tears were worth it in the end.

This is why Mr. Gibson was confident that the team was prepared for the state competition.

"Our team is very prepared and ready to take on any team at state," Gibson said prior to the competition. "This exact team made it to state two years ago also as freshmen and sophomores. Many of them were on last year's state qualifying team as well. So they have a lot of state tournament experience already."

"Since I've been a part of Mock Trial, we've always had a strong tradition of good mock trial teams. We've had some tremendous talent and we hope it continues in the

future," Gibson concluded.

"I think our team is very well prepared. We've been working on this case since August, so we should be ready to go," witness Evan Wiese said.

"I think that compared to the past two years, we are more comfortable with our roles and knowing specific rules and objections that can help you in a trial," Wiese said.

With all this in mind, the team headed off to Omaha. They competed in three trials throughout two days, wondering after every trial if they had won or not. At the conclusion of their third trial, the team waited to find out where they had placed. Honorable mention trophies were handed out, and not being called meant they were in the top four. With three trophies left, the team was called, creating a bittersweet moment for all. They hadn't reached the championship, but they had gotten third at state.

Semester Finals

Students' opinions on semester finals



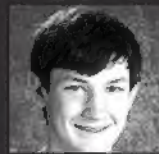
Jillian Dixon
Sophomore

I don't think semester finals will be as tough as last year



Sydney Johnson
Senior

They are stressful and unliked



Tanner Arrends
Junior

They are pointless



Taylor Kool
Freshman

I think they might be stressful



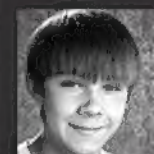
Shae Lott
Sophomore

They are easy



Caitlin Bartz
Sophomore

They stress me out



Quinnton Williams
Sophomore

Some are easy, some are hard



Colton Helgoth
Freshman

I think they are going to be stressful and difficult



Angelica Carlini
Junior

Sleep? there's no time to sleep



Clayton Loghry
Senior

Bring it on!



Junior Graves
Senior

They call them finals because it's your "final chance not to mess it up"



Evan Wiese
Junior

I'm nervous because I'm in some hard classes

Tis the Season.

Northwest students share their Christmas traditions

Tawny Moore
STAFF WRITER

Christmas is a very special holiday: not only for why it's important but because of the memories it creates. People have their own ways of doing things, especially during the holidays. Some people take vacations while others stay home and enjoy time with their families.

What is a tradition? Simply put, a tradition is a memory or a special event that you often repeat.

Many of people's favorite Christmas memories come from the traditions that they share. These traditions aren't necessarily exaggerated spectacular events; they can be as simple as "listening to the whole Justin Bieber Christmas album," which is one tradition freshman Stetson Guyette has.

Some students have more traditional celebrations.

"My Christmas is pretty normal, but one cool tradition is my family

likes to get together and we have a gift exchange! It's super fun until people steal what I want," said junior Maria Meyer.

People may not even realize it but everyone shares a few of the same traditions! How many families put up Christmas lights? Or a tree? How many decorate their houses? These are all popular Christmas traditions.

The normal traditions could be spending time with family.

"[Our traditions are] being with family, opening presents and of course the food!," said freshmen Jennifer Adams.

Some traditions can include Christmas Eve as well as Christmas Day.

"[On] Christmas Eve my family gets together and we open our gifts from each other. Christmas Day is spent with extended family," said junior Taylor Callahan.

When families are separated, certain traditions are set.

"When I'm not at my dad's and

when I was little, we would wake up, open presents, go to grandma's, eat, stay there all day, then go home," said freshman Jennifer Clement.

Even the Christmas tree itself can be a tradition.

"We buy a real tree and put it up the day after thanksgiving and we always make our own decorations," said freshman Reiley Hillman.

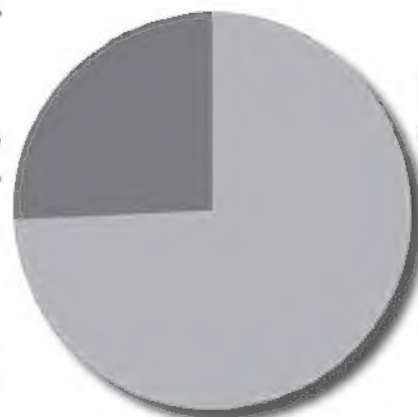
Some traditions could include shopping on Black Friday or on Christmas Eve, when lights are hung around the house or even what kind of tree is put up.

Some traditions don't even stay within families. One tradition that police officers and state patrolmen have is blue lights. They typically decorate their houses with blue lights. This is to symbolize the recognition for fallen officers.

Not everyone has a tradition and that's okay. Traditions aren't needed to make the holidays special. They just add to the many memories.

Does your family celebrate?

98% Yes
2% No



Do you celebrate a religious holiday?

74% Yes
26% No

Real Tree 84%
Fake Tree 13%
No Tree 4%



What is your favorite part of Christmas?

46% Family
20% Time off school
13% Presents
7% Food
16% Other

What's on your wish list?

14% new phone

2% iPad

4% iPod / mp3 player

5% video games/gaming system

25% clothes

23% cash/gift cards

28% other

What makes Christmas such a special time?

Jacilyn Bruns
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

It can be said (or sung) that Christmas is "the most wonderful time of the year." But, what is it that makes it so special?

The intangible feeling of excitement in the cold, frosty air never fails to come back every year at Christmastime, but where does it go once it's over?

To some, Christmas means that it's a time to celebrate the season with family members from near and far.

To junior Josiah Erdmann, there's three times the celebration.

"Christmas is special to me mainly because I get to spend time with my family, and also because I was born on my mom's birthday. It's very close to Christmas and it makes me happy to share my birthday with my mom; also, my dad's birthday is four days after that."

Along with family gathering for the holidays comes a multitude of delicious food, of course.

"You've got to have the turkey,"

freshman Trevor Koepp said. "Christmas isn't Christmas without a huge dinner."

Christmas can also be defined as the height of joy and happiness throughout the world. It's a reason for everyone to let down their walls and get along for awhile.

"I love Christmas because it is that time of year where everything seems perfect, and people just look so happy," senior Ana Costilla said.

When the calendar reaches December, there's a "bucket list" of things a person has to do before the holiday is over, such as spending time out in the snow, making dozens of yummy cookies into gingerbread men, and decorating the house on the inside and out. It's always a success if the lights are put up to adorn the house without blowing an electrical fuse.

"I always enjoy spending time with my family, exchanging presents with one another, being able to admire the beautiful snow covering the town, going sledding, and drinking hot chocolate while sitting by the fire," sophomore Megan

Supencheck said.

Christmas is also the time when all of the channels on TV feature seasonal classics, holiday romances, and favorite movies that are new and old.

"On Christmas morning, we watch the Disney Christmas parade and open presents. Then we watch all the Christmas movies that are playing on TV," sophomore McKenzie Douglass said.

Remembering the true reason for the season is an important thing to look back on when Christmas comes each year.

"The Christmas lights and the tree really set the whole tone of Christmas. Also, spending time celebrating the birth of Jesus with my family and church really means a lot to me. I love the whole atmosphere!" junior Mariah Franklin said.

Everyone has their own traditions with their family that make their holiday season special to them. Once all the tests are taken, the trees are trimmed, and the presents are wrapped, everyone will be able to make more Christmas memories on that special day.

orate Christmas?

es

No

brate Christmas as
oliday?

Yes

No

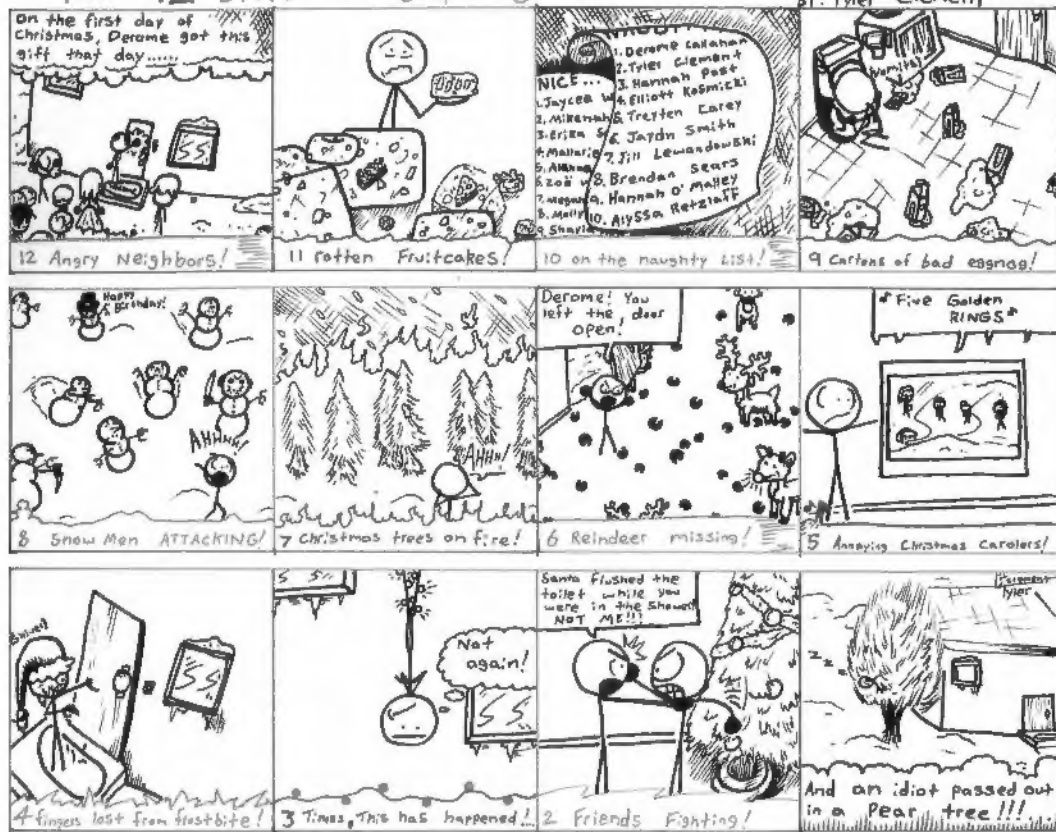


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Derome the Twisted Stickfigure in..... "THE 12 DAYS OF StupidITY"

BY: Tyler Clement



Taken from a poll of 167
Northwest High students

Does *Halo 4* Live Up to Expectations?

Kyler **Janecek**
STAFF WRITER

As diehard fans of the series will know, the last addition to the core *Halo* series, *Halo 3*, came out in 2007. Spinoffs on the series such as *Halo Wars*, *ODST*, and *Reach* aside, *Halo 4* is the first game that builds on the main storyline for 5 years. But this is not the only cause for hype. This is also the first new game made by 343 Industries. (the older ones were made by a company called Bungie, who sold the franchise after *Halo: Reach* back in 2010.)

What this means is basically this: the *Halo* series is in new hands, and where they will take it is known only to them. After such a long, successful run at the hands of Bungie, will the newest installment live up to the high standard live up to the expectations set by the previous games?

Having previously been on my own wish list for the holidays, I got a surprise chance to rent and play it through over Thanksgiving weekend. The story picks up 4 years after *Halo 3*'s left off. Master Chief (the character you play as) wakes up on the ruins of a ship to find that it has drifted into a Covenant fleet. After fighting his way through hordes of aliens singlehandedly, the ship is suddenly ripped apart and sucked in to the strange gravitational pull of an alien planet.

The story may seem impenetrable to a non-*Halo* fan- and that's because it is. It doesn't matter if all you want this game for is to shoot loads of things- *Halo 4* serves this cause nicely. However, if you're looking for a story driven game you can get into, I recommend you play the previous games in the series before even thinking about this one.

The graphics are nice, the classic music tracks are all there and the story will keep you entertained. That's obviously not the part that matters though. So onto the gameplay. There have been many changes in terms of the gameplay, and as far as I can tell, all were for the better.

For the first time, you can sprint freely. Not just a fast walk, and not just as a perk like in *Reach*, but an actual sprint, with no real limit, whenever you want. The perk system makes a return, including a few more useful abilities, and the game features all new weapons that all work well and are all fun to use.

Other than that, combat is mostly the same as it was in *Halo: Reach*. So the question

remains: is it good? The answer to that is a definite yes. However, if you were to ask if it was as good as the previous games, the answer is uncertain. As far as gameplay goes, it is the most advanced of all the games. After 6 games, the controls have finally evolved into the absolutely flawless setup that appears in this game. You will have to get used to it, yes- you'll almost certainly throw a grenade at your own feet a few times when trying to reload- but once you memorize the controls you'll never want to go back.

The problem is, It just doesn't have the same wow factor the other games did. The story just seems like a spin-off- which is not a good thing considering that this is supposed to be a continuation. It makes sense though, as this is the first real effort from a company that is new to the series, trying to continue a story that was already ended. It is a hard task, and let's face it; they did an okay job, and probably the best that could have been done. It just leaves a bad taste in your mouth. The story only matters for your first run-through though; as soon as that's over, it's a non-issue, leaving only one real problem that affects you afterwards- the multiplayer experience.

I didn't get to play much of the multiplayer, but from what I saw it seems more limiting than any game has been so far. Gone are the options to choose whatever weapons you want, when you want. Instead, the *Call Of Duty* style load out system appears. I honestly don't think that it was the best move. Sure, it adds challenge, and multiplayer is still fun, but it takes away from the freedom, at least in my opinion. But at the end of the day, that doesn't break the game, and having not played more than a couple hours of it, I can only assume it gets better as you unlock more.

So for the verdict- is it a good game? Absolutely, you will have lots of fun with this game. Is it as good as classics like *Halo 3*? It depends on how you look at it, but unless you're a die-hard fan that shouldn't matter, and even if you are you should still play it. The only people who I don't recommend this game to are non-fans who want to get into the series. I recommend they start somewhere more easily accessible such as with *Halo: Reach*, or *Combat Evolved* before trying this game. However, everyone else should get ahold of this game as soon as possible, as it is worth whatever you may have to pay for it.

Anticipation of *Black Ops 2* is rightfully received

Cody **Bristow**
STAFF WRITER

Black Ops 2 could possibly be one of the most anticipated games of the year. If you haven't yet played the first *Black Ops*, I would strongly recommend trying it. *Black Ops 2* picks up right where you left off at the end of the first game.

A few differences are the character and the ending. There are six different endings that you can choose from. In the first *Black Ops*, the main character is Alex Mason. *Black Ops 2* stars the son of Alex Mason, David Mason. In *Black Ops*,

once you've earned prestige, all your weapons reset, your camouflage, and anything else you've unlocked. Prestige is like the highest and most honorable ranking you can earn. Another change in *Black Ops 2* is once you earn prestige, everything stays the same. For example, if you have level 4 guns, they will stay level 4 when you level up.

That is one of the many new and great features of *Black Ops 2*. In multiplayer, the new Score Streak system rewards players that play to the objective and help their team win. Multiplayer

obviously means you play with friends, and campaign is a single player "missions" mode. In campaign, *Black Ops 2* introduces players to an insidious villain named Raul Menendez, who hijacks the US military infrastructure to further his own agenda. The ZOMBIES mode also has new features. Zombies features three different ways to survive the zombie apocalypse. You can also compete in the new 4v4 last-human-standing mode.

I would strongly suggest buying this game and playing it all the way through.

Preview: *Borderlands 2* will be Your Next Favorite Game

Kyler **Janecek**
STAFF WRITER

A not-so-big release recently was *Borderlands 2*, the sequel to a critically acclaimed game in which you are a treasure hunter on the planet Pandora, looking for the ultimate treasure, called the Vault.

It's up to you to decide which character class you choose, and what weapons you fight with. The game may look like your standard shooter (admittedly with a much nicer cell shaded art style) but actually

takes the form of a shooter/RPG, with health bars and a leveling up system. This may seem like an odd mix, but it works extremely well and is a lot of fun to play.

Borderlands 2 takes place five years after the original. A dictator has risen, and is taking all the credit for finding the vault. Basically, this means bad things for the people of Pandora, so a new group of vault hunters have been tasked with killing him and bringing peace back to the planet.

Having only

recently discovered the original, I already can't wait to play through the second.

Don't be fooled by the big title releases such as *COD* and *Halo*- I honestly believe that this is the game to get this year. Go out and buy it, bring a friend over to your house, lock yourselves in a room for a few days with a sign on your door with a stash of Mountain Dew and chips, and play through this game on split screen co-op; it may just be the most fun you could possibly have this month.

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Hoops season arrives

Sarah Heinen
STAFF WRITER

Winter sports season is here, Northwest. That means it's basketball time. The boys and girls teams have an exciting road ahead of them. The girls team is starting this season with a fresh new coach and three returning starters and the boys team with some strong leadership and high goals.

With trust, togetherness and toughness, the Northwest Boys Basketball team plans to go very far this year.

"For this year's team to go farther than last year, we're going to have to play together and all the way through," said

senior Zach Rouzee.

Their top two goals this year, according to head coach Ryan Rathke, are to win both the Conference and District Tournaments. With their hard work ethic and outstanding team leadership that this season will be a very productive season for the boys basketball team this year.

As for the girls, their hustle and heart will set them apart. The team's brand new coach, Coach Michael Herzberg, believes that if a team has passion and discipline for the game, that's when a team will go somewhere.

"He shows a genuine passion for us and the game," senior Kaley

Werner said.

There's a common positive attitude throughout the whole team regarding the new coach. Because the returning girls from last year's team were state qualifiers, they are going to accept nothing less than that.

"It's the little things that will matter in the end," junior Erin Sorhan said.

Both teams have set very high goals for themselves and have their minds set to be the best. The trust, togetherness and toughness of the boys team and the hustle and heart of the girls team are the two things that will take these two teams to victory.

Viking swim team races to a successful season

Megan Whited
STAFF WRITER

For some people it's a passion, for some it's a hobby, and for others, it's all they know. Being in the water has become more than a sport to the Viking swim team; it's become a lifestyle. They hope to accomplish big goals this season.

"There's not a day that goes by that I don't think about swimming," senior Garrett Forgey said.

Swimmers are just like other athletes.

"My expectations this year are for all of the swimmers to try and improve their times," senior Herman Marks stated.

Swimming had their first meet December 4th. Overall the teams did outstanding, with the boys beating Lincoln Southeast for the first time in 25 years and both girls and boys beating

Lincoln North Star.

"I got all personal records and some even broke their pool records and I got second in one of my heats," Marks said.

The Viking Swimming team co-ops with Grand Island Senior High school.

The swimmers have had many practices

and work very hard to achieve their goals. They started their two-a-day practices. On Tuesdays and Thursdays the team practices once in the morning at 5:15 am

until 7:00 am. Then again after school at 3:50 pm until 5:30 pm.

"Two-a-days puts us in a better position to face teams like Omaha Westside and Lincoln that have access to a school pool," Forgey said.

With leadership, focus, and perseverance they will be able to achieve their goals.

"There's not a day that goes by that I don't think about swimming"
Senior Garrett Forgey



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